

# Alder Gulch

By Ernest Haycox

ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN G. BAUMGARTNER

## The Story Thus Far:

SHANGHAIED in San Francisco, young Jeff Pierce (a veteran of the Civil War, which is still raging) is taken aboard a ship to Portland, Oregon. There, attacked by the captain of the vessel, he kills the fellow, in self-defense, leaps into the water, swims ashore.

On a dark Portland street, he is approached by a girl—Diana Castle—who, obviously in trouble of some sort, implores him to take her away with him, *anywhere!* Accompanied by the girl, who poses as his wife, he finally makes his way to Virginia City, in Alder Gulch, where gold has recently been struck. On the way, Pierce has a series of altercations—and two fist fights—with two rascals who are also en route to Alder Gulch: George Ives and his Man Friday, "Rube" Ketchum.

Among those he meets who are more to his liking are: Will Temperton, a gambler, and his young daughter, Lily Beth (whom Diana takes under her wing); Lil Shannon, a free-and-easy woman who is very kind to Pierce; Ollie Rounds, an uncommunicative redhead, who is reticent concerning his past; and Ben Scoggins, who hopes to make a fortune as a trader

in Alder Gulch. Among those he sees, during the long, hazardous trip is *Sitgreaves, the dead captain's brother, who is following him!* Certain that Sitgreaves is pursuing him, and not wanting to kill another man, Pierce slips away; again, he is accompanied by the girl.

In Virginia City, Pierce and Diana part company. Diana is soon making a living by baking pies for a restaurant; and it is not long before Pierce has a claim staked out. . . . Dillingham, a deputy sheriff, is murdered by three toughs: Hayes Lyons, Buck Stinson and Charley Forbes. The killers are caught; but George Ives, who has just arrived, succeeds in obtaining their release!

By this time, Barney Morris—a prospector who has befriended Pierce—has reason to suspect that Ives, Ketchum and other crooks are plotting to kill him and take his gold—eight thousand dollars worth. He plans to slip away (if he can) and go to the town of Bannack. He asks Pierce if he will take the gold to Bannack.

Pierce is fond of Morris. He takes the gold to Bannack—unmolested. There he entrusts the gold to the clerk at the stage office. Then, following a brief, friendly talk with the sheriff—Sheriff Plummer—he leaves the office.

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PIERCE was on the dark side of Bannack's street. He moved through these shadows, leaving a wake of cigar smoke behind. Durand's saloon, directly across the way, was an eruption of light and confusion. Men came steadily into town. The sheriff was ahead of Pierce and now he crossed the street and came back, idly and with every mark of indolence; he stopped at the saloon and looked through the doorway a while and seemed to debate with himself, and at last entered. Pierce halted and leaned a shoulder to a wall. A woman and a small girl passed him and swung into a store; three riders entered town, rounded before Durand's, and dismounted. When they faced the light from the saloon's doorway, Pierce recognized Rube Ketchum and George Ives. He didn't know the third one.

He remembered that his horse was still standing by the stage office; and he had forgotten his slicker. He grunted to himself and moved back. When he stepped into the stage office the clerk pulled up his head and for that one slim interval Pierce saw fear unsteady the clerk.

A wagon came clacking into the street. Pierce picked up the slicker and turned out with it; when he reached the sidewalk he noticed the wagon had stopped near by. Two men got off the seat and came to the tail gate and other men moved forward from the night. Somebody said, "What you got, George?"

"Dead man."

"Where'd you find him?"

"Four, five miles out in the brush, short-cutting over from the Rattlesnake."

The two lifted the dead man from the wagon and brought him to the walk. Pierce found himself on the outer edge of the crowd, and used his shoulders to push through; looking down, he saw Barney Morris lying there, a bullet hole passing through his head, temple to temple.

One of the men said, "Better call Plummer."

"Why," said one of the men who had brought Barney Morris in, "a dead man's just a dead man. You call Plummer."

Another figure pushed into the circle. "Hell, that's Barney Morris. He used to work a claim next to mine, down Grasshopper."

Plummer was at this moment coming out of Durand's saloon. Pierce withdrew from the crowd and stood at the sidewalk's edge with his head pulled down by his quick and angered thoughts. He moved to his horse, got to the saddle, and rode to the street's end, here pausing.

Plummer had come into the circle. Pierce heard him say, "That's Barney Morris. He was one of my best friends!" The crowd grew. Looking beyond it, Pierce noticed Ketchum and Ives and the third man paused at the doorway of Durand's. He touched his spurs to the horse and went on out of Bannack at a trot. The horse was stiff with his day's work and had little run left in him and kept falling back to a walk, and had to be spurred. He passed Bunton's and near midnight came to the Beaverhead. Here he made a dry camp well away from the road.

IVES patronized Durand's bar with Steve Marshland and Ketchum until the crowd came back. Some miner said, "Old Barney had a lot of money and never spent any. He had a good claim on Alder. I heard once he had fifty thousand buried."

"Not a dime on him now."

Ives looked wryly at his empty glass and put it aside. He said to Marshland and Ketchum, "Come on."

The three of them left the saloon and walked as far as the corner of the hotel. They turned down a side street, saying nothing. Half a dozen houses fronted this side street; beyond that was a corral and a shed and the slope of a bold hill. The (Continued on page 38)

He saw Diana Castle leaving the restaurant with Lily Beth. He drew a smile from her and fell into step beside Diana. "That was good apple pie I had today," he told her



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The championship Multnomah Club swimming team: Left to right, Joyce Macrae, Suzanne Zimmerman, Brenda Helser, Nancy Merki and Anne Cooney. Miss Merki and Miss Helser are this year's A.A.U. choices as outstanding women swimmers

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR COLLIER'S BY IFOR THOMAS

OREGON is a land of he-men who fell fir trees and climb mighty mountains, but the best athletes produced in Oregon since the arrival of the covered wagons are four slender high-school girls who prefer movies, deep poetry, chocolate ice-cream sodas and the latest rumba to life in the great open spaces. They hold more athletic championships than all Oregon's male stalwarts combined.

Also in defiance of the classical Oregon tradition, the crowning ambition of these girls has been not to stand on the uppermost pinnacle of Mount Hood or Eagle Gap, but to dance and watch the celebrities at the Stork Club in New York City. On a recent transcontinental trip the girls' coach, Jack Cody, asked what reward they wanted for setting a grand total of 61 world, American, regional and state swimming records. "A

table at the Stork Club!" they cried in unison.

"It's a bargain," he promised, and so a few weeks later four nimble and long-legged lassies from the Far West, who have shown their thrashing feet to some of the outstanding women swimmers in the United States, sat with bright eyes in Manhattan's famous rendezvous, collecting the wages of innumerable swimming victories. "Golly, isn't this keen?" said Brenda Helser, the liveliest rug-cutter among them, to Joyce Macrae, while Nancy Merki and Suzanne Zimmerman nodded in complete agreement.

The aggregate ages of this quartet that dominates the tanks and lakes and pools of the Pacific Coast would just qualify someone for an old-age pension under the laws of the U.S.A. Brenda and Joyce are each 17, Suzanne is 16 and Nancy 15. They enjoy the company of

boy friends, think Tyrone Power is simply grand and are normal high-school girls in all respects except that they have proved their superiority in the water over everything but the Pacific Fleet and the fall salmon run.

Their athletic supremacy over Oregon's masculine population was vividly demonstrated last summer during the annual marathon swim at Lake Oswego, nestled in the tree-blanketed hills near Portland. The heftiest male aquastars in the state were lined along the pier ready for their dives when Nancy, Joyce, Susie and Brenda walked up unobtrusively and slipped off their bathrobes. With amused tolerance the big fellows eyed these slim youngsters who presumed to challenge them over three miles of choppy water.

Then the gun barked and the race was on. The contestants, trailed by their

boats, settled into a steady pace. One of the favorites, Doug MacQuaig, was surging forward with strong, powerful strokes when something streaked past him. He thought at first it might be a fish, but it turned and said, "Hello." It was Nancy. Soon the same thing happened again. This time it was Brenda. The girls disappeared in the distance like Coast Guard cutters.

When Doug finished the three-mile grind, first of all the men swimmers to do so, Nancy and Brenda had draped towels over their shoulders and were waiting calmly on the dock. To add insult to injury they gave Doug a helping hand out of the lake. Susie came in just behind Doug and far ahead of Spike Paget and other star swimmers. Joyce had what she called a bad day, but finished among the first 10, nevertheless. Besides all this, Nancy's time of 1 hour, 10 minutes and 18 seconds established a new record for an event in which the brawniest athletes in Oregon have competed for years.

Ever since the four girls began swimming together in 1939 they have been about the best aquatic combination ever developed along the Pacific seaboard, where youngsters learn to swim almost as soon as they can toddle. As a team their specialty is the 400-yard relay, which they have reduced to an exact science. Already they have set records for the United States and a long list of its geographic subdivisions, including

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